Manufacturing Landscapes: 
Place and Community at Glen Bernard Camp, 1924-1933

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Between 1924 and 1933, girls at Glen Bernard—a private summer camp for girls in the northern reaches of Ontario’s premier cottage country, Muskoka—composed stories and poems to be read at the weekly Council Ring. Several of their compositions, which offer vignettes of camp life, were published annually in The Scroll. Whereas much of the existing scholarship on early-twentieth-century camping in Canada and the United States favours the perspective of adults, this essay argues that The Scroll is suggestive of the ways in which the girls who attended camp perceived their own experiences, acquired a sense of place, and negotiated community boundaries. Summer camps, while products of the structures designed and implemented by directors and counselors, were also shaped by the spatial and social practices of the girls who inhabited their cabins, tramped along their trails, gathered round their campfires.

De 1924 à 1933, les filles qui séjournaient à Glen Bernard – un camp d’été privé pour filles dans la zone nord du prestigieux pays des chalets de l’Ontario, la région de Muskoka – composaient des récits et des poèmes à lire au cercle hebdomadaire du conseil. Plusieurs de leurs compositions, qui brossent un aperçu de la vie au camp, paraissaient tous les ans dans The Scroll. Une bonne partie du savoir actuel sur le camping du début du XXe siècle au Canada et aux États-Unis accrédite le regard des adultes, or l’essai que voici soutient que The Scroll montre comment les filles qui fréquentaient le camp percevaient leur propre expérience, cultivaient un sentiment d’appartenence et délimitaient leur collectivité. S’ils étaient le produit de structures conçues et mises en place par des directeurs et des conseillers, les camps d’été étaient également façonnés par les pratiques spatiales et sociales des filles qui en habitaient les cabines, en battaient les sentiers et s’y rassemblaient autour des feux de camp.

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SUMMER CAMPS, as Claire Campbell notes, are established “icons of Canadiana,” even as, with a few exceptions, they have been a very particular “rite of passage” for the country’s elite rather than an experience of the masses.1 Despite their cultural import, the first scholarly monograph on camps and camping in Canada was only published in 2009.2 Focusing primarily on Ontario in the interwar and early postwar period, Sharon Wall’s award-winning The Nurture of Nature skillfully frames the study of residential camping within the context of modernity. Wall concludes that summer camps were hybrid institutions that neither “wholly resisted [nor] wholly embraced” modernity, but were nonetheless deeply implicated in its unfolding.3 While this accurately characterizes one aspect of residential camping, there was more to summer camp in this period than instilling antimodern sensibilities in a modern way, particularly if we consider the perspective of the children and youth who attended such institutions. As with much of the historical scholarship on camping in Canada and the United States, Wall is, as editor Graeme Wynn observes, more concerned with “the longer term and broader implications (both personal and cultural)” of the summer camp phenomenon than “with the immediate sentiments and reactions of individual campers to their circumstances,” and understandably so.4 Sources describing such immediate sentiments and reactions are elusive in the archive, which is dominated by documents articulating what adults (usually camp administrators) were trying to do.5 Even oral history interviews conducted with former campers are produced from the vantage point of adulthood. However,

texts generated by girls at the time of their experience are not absent from archival collections, as Leslie Paris’s work on American summer camps, in particular, has demonstrated.6 Letters, diaries, scrapbooks, and camp newspapers, where available, all offer opportunities to gain a better understanding of what it was like to be a child at summer camp.

I explore the possibilities and limitations of one such source: The Scroll, a yearly publication of Glen Bernard Camp (GBC), a private girls’ camp near Sundridge, Ontario (see Figure 1). Produced between 1924 and 1933, The Scroll features the creative writing of campers and staff alongside descriptions of the closing week activities, lists of the summer’s award winners, the camp directory, and advertisements.7 With few exceptions, the poetry, prose, songs, and jokes composed by the girls explore various aspects of camp life. The Scroll is by no means a transparent window onto the past; the compositions were mediated by a number of influences, which I discuss in greater detail below. Nor does The Scroll provide a comprehensive picture of camp life. Rather, it presents Glen Bernard in a series of vignettes, comparable to a shoebox of photographs. Other sources are therefore necessary to place the images of GBC constructed by the girls into context. In spite of these limitations, the creative writing in The Scroll remains a rare source of “girls’ voices” from the period in question, even as it captures the experiences of a narrow social stratum, namely white, upper-middle-class girls from Toronto.8 Guided by their contributions to the publication, I argue that the Glen Bernard campers, through particular spatial and social practices, helped create the physical environments, the imagined geographies, and the human communities of GBC, even as they were being shaped by these elements.9 In other words, the architects of these places and communities were not just the camp directors and counsellors, but the campers as well. By encouraging the recall, articulation, analysis, and communication of these spatial and social practices by campers, The Scroll played a vital role in manufacturing the physical, social, and imagined landscapes of Glen Bernard.

6 In addition to camp records, brochures, industry copy, memoirs, and oral interviews, Paris draws on “children’s writing in camp newspapers, diaries, and scrapbooks; [and] letters home” (Children’s Nature, p. 13).
7 The Trent University Archives is home to ten editions of The Scroll, published between 1924 and 1933. There is no record of other editions. See Trent University Archives [hereafter TUA], 72-007/1/3, The Scroll, 1924-1933.
8 As Kate McDowell has noted in “Toward a History of Children as Readers, 1890-1930,” Book History, vol. 12 (July 2009), “Except perhaps in diaries, children have had little say in recording their own history, and even on such ostensibly free pages, the pressure to conform to adult expectations or the fear of prying adult eyes may have shaped children’s writings” (p. 244). She concludes, “Children’s voices and experiences must be analyzed in light of the practical relations they had with adults and the contexts in which their voices were recorded” (p. 246).
The intertwined themes of community and place animate this study. My understanding of community has been informed by the work of John C. Walsh and Steven High, which emphasizes the “cultural and imagined elements” of community, the ways in which community is constituted through the “social spaces of everyday interactions and exchanges,” and community as “a social
process predicated on relationships.”

10 John C. Walsh and Steven High, “Rethinking the Concept of Community,” *Histoire sociale/Social History*, vol. 32, no. 64 (November 1999), pp. 257, 260, 261.


13 Places, as Doreen Massey reminds us in “Places and Their Pasts,” *History Workshop Journal*, vol. 39, no. 1 (1995), are “always constructed out of articulations of social relations . . . which are not only internal to that locale but which link them to elsewhere.” Moreover, their identity is always “temporary, uncertain, and in process” (p. 183).


15 Later girls’ camps included Camp Wapomeo (1924), the sister camp to Taylor Statten’s Camp Ahmek (1921), Camp Tanamakoon (1924), and Camp Oconto (1925). See Ontario Camping Association [hereafter OCA], *Blue Lake and Rocky Shore: A History of Children’s Camping in Ontario* (Toronto: Natural Heritage/Natural History Inc., 1984), p. 3.

16 For a useful description of the different types of camps in operation in the early twentieth century, see Van Slyck, *A Manufactured Wilderness*, pp. xxvii-xxviii.
and staff member at Glen Bernard in the 1920s and 1930s, skillfully captured the exclusivity of GBC in the introduction to a 1940 psychological study on socialization at the camp:

The majority of its campers come from one city, but smaller places in the province and a few in the United States are represented. The camp population is largely derived from a relatively narrow economic stratum of society, ranging upward from the upper middle class. Racially it is also a highly selected group, consisting almost entirely of Canadians or North Americans of the Nordic Race. . . . All conventional branches of the Protestant faith are represented; there are a few Roman Catholics, but no Jews. Politically, the groups represented are of traditional Conservative or Liberal parties, with a few mildly socialistic-minded present. The educational background of the campers is that of private schools (two-thirds of the group), and the public and high schools in the “better” parts of the city. The camp society is, therefore, highly homogenous in background. The spread is small in age, home, wealth, creed, race, or school.17

There were, of course, exceptions to this characterization. For example, former camper Janet Van Every took her friend Katsunogi, “a Japanese girl,” to camp with her that first summer. According to Van Every, “This started the camp off with an international atmosphere. All the girls liked Katsu very much and were intrigued by her personally and interested in her Japanese background.”18 That campers would be intrigued by Katsu owed much to the historical demography of interwar Ontario, where the Japanese were a small percentage of the population,19 but especially to the fact that private summer camps welcomed a particular demographic that rarely included immigrants or the working class.20 At $200 per summer or $110 for four weeks during the 1920s, camps like Glen Bernard were also largely inaccessible to the native-born, Anglo-Ontarian middle class.21 As Bettina Liverant has shown, even as real wages increased following World War I, the rising cost of living in Canada (and throughout the industrialized world in the decades after the turn of the century) strained middle-class family budgets, of which approximately 75 per cent was devoted to food and accommodation.22

19 According to the 1921 Census, individuals of Japanese origin represented less than 2 per cent of Canada’s total population (8,787,949) in the immediate postwar era, while individuals of “Asiatic” origin represented 7.5 per cent of the country’s population. A decade later, 2.25 per cent of the population (10,376,789) were Japanese, with people of “Asiatic” origin occupying just over 8 per cent of the total population. The vast majority of these lived in British Columbia. See Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *Sixth Census of Canada, 1921* (Ottawa, 1924).
20 This is in contrast to organizational and agency camps, which specifically targeted such groups (Wall, *The Nurture of Nature*, pp. 9-12; Van Slyck, *A Manufactured Wilderness*, pp. xxvii-xxviii).
21 In 1929, fewer than 5 per cent of Canadian income earners brought in more than $2,500, the bottom end of the national income tax scale. See Cynthia R. Comacchio, *The Dominion of Youth: Adolescence and the Making of Modern Canada, 1920-1950* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2006), p. 51.
There was, in other words, little disposable income for luxuries such as summer camp. This was particularly true during the Depression. The camp lowered its rates slightly at this time (to $185 for the summer and $100 for one month), but likely with little effect on the makeup of the campers.23

Mary S. Edgar was largely typical of private camp directors in the interwar years. Like many of the women directors, she had never married.24 Similarly, she had ties to the educational system and to the field of social services.25 Edgar had attended Havergal College, one of Toronto’s elite private girls’ schools, for two years, and had taken classes in the Education Department at Columbia University in New York.26 She had also worked with the Canadian Girls in Training (CGIT) and the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA).27 In contrast to her peers, however, Edgar established her camp close to the town where she had been born and raised.28 Located on the shores of Lake Bernard in the “Parry Sound district, 183 miles north of Toronto on the [Grand Trunk Railroad],”29 Sundridge had been settled by Euro-Canadians in the 1870s. Like much of the Ottawa-Huron Tract, the region was better suited to the forestry industry that arose in the late nineteenth century than to agriculture, although family farms persisted into the twentieth century.30 Edgar’s parents had, since 1885, owned and operated a general store in the village.31 They were also active members of the Sundridge community. Joseph Edgar, an Irish immigrant, was reeve of Strong Township and the Conservative Member of Provincial Parliament for Parry Sound District from 1914 to 1919. Margaret Edgar was at various times president of the Women’s Auxiliary of the Anglican Church, the Women’s Institute, and the Children’s Aid.32

24 Of the five private girls’ camps in Ontario by 1925, only Wapomeo was overseen by a married woman, Ethel Statten (OCA, *Blue Lake and Rocky Shore*, p. 3).
25 Mary Hamilton, director of Camp Tanamakoon, was an instructor at and later the principal of Margaret Eaton School in Toronto. The founding director of the first private boys’ camp in Ontario, A. L. Cochrane, was an instructor at Upper Canada College in Toronto. Taylor Statten, founder of Camp Ahmek and Camp Wapomeo, had been a Boys’ Work Secretary with the YMCA prior to establishing his camps. See Wall, *The Nurture of Nature*, pp. 17-18.
27 Edgar had previously been employed as the Girls’ Work Secretary at the Toronto and Montreal YWCAs, where she was influential in the establishment of Camp Oolawhan (Queen’s University Archives [hereafter QUA], Mary S. Edgar Fonds, 2057/8/1, *Memoir for the Ontario Camping Association*, n.d.).
28 Joseph Edgar lent Mary the $5,000 necessary to purchase the Gibbons farm and to conduct the necessary renovations in 1921; he forgave the debt in his will (TUA, 90-016/1, Interview with Mary L. Northway, September 29, 1981).
In the early years at least, the camp, which was in sight of the village by way of the lake, had close ties to Sundridge. In part these ties reflected Edgar’s own locality. However, they are also indicative of the dependence that camps in this period had on nearby towns and farms for both goods and services. Sundridge residents such as Jack McCabe ferried the girls and their luggage between the train station and the campsite in their trucks, while women who lived along the lakeshore were contracted to do the camp’s “flat laundry.” The camp also purchased supplies from area farmers. Mr. Haggart, whose farm was just north of GBC, provided milk and ice, while others supplied fruits and vegetables. Finally, Sundridge served as a destination for camp outings. In addition to frequenting the village throughout the summer for ice cream, GBC campers attended the annual community picnic at Hartvelt, where they “ate home-made meats, pickles, salads, pies, and cakes off the groaning trestle tables,” “listened to the local folks sing, recite, [and] preach,” and “played games with their children.”

Local residents were occasionally welcomed to the camp for special events. A 1922 newspaper article, for example, recounts details of the “farewell concert” that the girls put on “for the benefit of a number of visitors from town and country.” The camp also hosted day-long picnics each year for local families, one of which was immortalized in a poem by Margaret Lambe:

They began to arrive quite soon after lunch  
First this little family, then that little bunch.  
Children and grown folks of every kind  
Down to the Lodge the procession did wind.  
Off to baseball the boys then proceeded  
Though it was quite plain our persuasions were needed  
Races there were then for every last one,  
For mother and daughter, for father and son.  
And prizes! such prizes! were proudly received,  
The winners were glad and the losers were grieved.

33 “Swinging,” The Scroll, 1928, p. 51.  
34 Like her parents, Edgar maintained a life-long commitment to the public life of Sundridge. She helped finance a number of local projects, including the construction of a community centre and library. As a centennial project, she donated a piece of land on Lake Bernard to be a park “for the people of Sundridge” (QUA, 2057/8/9, Mary L. Northway, “Mary S. Edgar, 1889-1973”; QUA, 2057/9/9, “Birthday Party for Mary Edgar,” North Bay Nugget, May 1969).  
35 Edgar appears to have made special efforts to support the community. Enid Walker claimed, “Miss Edgar used to say, ‘Whatever could be done or bought in Sundridge should be’” (“The Early Days at Glen Bernard” in Lee and Robins, The Lake in the Hills, p. 40).  
36 For the most part, the girls did their personal laundry in this period (TUA, 97-032, “Mary Northway’s Recollections of GBC,” May 16, 1982).  
37 QUA, “Mary S. Edgar, 1889-1973.” This changed over time. For example, when the government passed pasteurization legislation in 1938, the camp no longer purchased milk directly from local farmers but had milk brought in from Brampton (TUA, Interview with Mary L. Northway).  
Then up to the hilltop the merry throng went
Where eating and drinking a good time was spent.
Ice-cream and cookies, candy and punch –
They certainly helped us dispose of the lunch,
Then off they went homeward, happy and gay,
Thanking us all for a wonderful day.  

However, few of the town’s residents ever attended the camp. On the occasion of the GBC’s fiftieth anniversary, a reporter for the *North Bay Nugget* claimed that “over the years only one family in Sundridge [had] sent their daughters to Glen Bernard.” While the reporter rather generously suggested that “it was enough to know the camp was a haven for others,” the following line, which highlighted the social divide between the GBC girls and local residents, was likely closer to the truth: “In the hearts of many a young Sundridge girl was the desire to be ‘one of them’.”

The picnics were but one of the ways in which the camp sought to “serve” the local community. Other projects included the distribution of Christmas hampers to Sundridge families and the donation of used clothing to those in need. These activities were carried out under the banner of the Glen Bernard Camper’s Club, an organization developed “to hold together the common interest of the girls and leaders, past and present, from the first and following years of camp, – and also to do some helpful work among the poor.” The club also raised money for projects at a variety of fresh-air camps, started a fund to send underprivileged children to camp, and donated money to organizations such as the YWCA conducting overseas camp work. Edgar’s support of such activities was likely a function of her own familial experience with philanthropy and her strong Christian faith. However, the Camper’s Club also had precedents in the many “service leagues” targeting young women that emerged in the decades around the turn of the century. Georgina Brewis characterizes service leagues as “part of a broader movement to promote social service as a duty of citizenship incumbent

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40 “The Sundridge Picnic,” *The Scroll*, 1929, p. 31. The paternalism that permeates this poem is also evident in the description in *The Scroll*: “This is a red-letter day for these children of the north country. There are games and races with numerous prizes, a Fairy play in the out-door Theatre, refreshments and, most exciting of all, ‘a candy-scramble’ in which the sturdy farmers as well as the small folks eagerly scramble for the candies which are scrambled over the grass” (“The Glen Bernard Campers’ Club,” *The Scroll*, 1928, p. 11).


42 There is some indication that the Depression altered the girls’ charity work. At a meeting of the Campers’ Club in 1931, it was “decided that, instead of sending Christmas parcels this year to the children on the farms near Sundridge, that a large box of clothes and toys would be sent instead to Saskatchewan, where the need is apparently greater” (*The Scroll*, 1931, p. 3).

43 This particular description suggests that the charity work was secondary to the role played by the group in maintaining the camp community in the off-season (“The Glen Bernard Camp Club Activities for the Winter of 1925-1926,” *The Scroll*, 1926, p. 57).

on the educated classes,” although they also sought to “channel youthful energies which might otherwise find outlets in frivolous pleasures or in ‘unworthy directions’.”45 However, as Elise Chenier’s work on the Montreal Junior League has demonstrated, service leagues also encouraged particular feminine ideals and reinforced class divisions.46 The Camper’s Club, in other words, is an example of the camp’s efforts to teach elite girls about class-based duty and gendered voluntarism in ways that, if Margaret Lambe’s poem is any indication, drew clear distinctions between “generous” upper-class citizens and “needy” and appropriately grateful recipients of charity.

Glen Bernard, in spite of its apparent remove, remained connected to the wider world throughout the summer months in both material and discursive ways. In 1926, for instance, Edgar instituted what might best be termed “Old Girls’ Weeks,”47 during which former campers were invited to return to GBC to reconnect with fellow campers and take part in their favourite camp activities.48 Other visitors also found their way to GBC as spectators and as participants in the camp programme. The 1928 Scroll, for example, remarked on the “large invited audience” that took part in a play in “a beautiful Out-of-Door setting,” as well as the “party of English School girls” touring Canada that had made a stop at the camp.49 In 1929, “informal talks” at the last Sunday morning chapel service were delivered by Mr. Brockwell, then director of Onondaga Camp, and Miss Emma Kaufman of the Tokyo YWCA.50 Similarly, Edgar arranged for Aboriginal visitors to take part in the Council Ring ceremonies at three points during her tenure as director.51 These included Iroquois poet and performer Bernice Loft Winslow (Dawendine), Chief Mudjeekwis of the Rice Lake Ojibway, and Nanaki (Norah Gladstone), a Blackfoot woman from the Western Plains.52

Beyond the revolving door of visitors at the camp, the dynamic director highlighted the camp’s ties to other people and places in her weekly chapel talks. In

47 These types of festivals, which were popular events in small Ontario towns in the 1920s and 1930s, played an important role in reproducing the bounds of community. See John C. Walsh, “Performing Public Memory and Re-Placing Home in the Ottawa Valley, 1900-1958,” in James Opp and John C. Walsh, eds., Placing Memory and Remembering Place in Canada (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2010), pp. 25-56; Françoise Noel, “Old Home Week Celebrations as Tourism Promotion and Commemoration: North Bay, Ontario, 1925 and 1935,” Urban History Review, vol. 37, no. 1 (Fall 2008), pp. 36-47.
48 In 1928, The Scroll began featuring a column entitled “New Items of Old Girls,” which performed a similar function.
50 “In Senior Camp,” The Scroll, 1929, p. 5.
52 QUA, “Our Indebtedness to Our Indian Friends,” pp. 2-5. Because these visits took place between 1935 and 1953, we have no record of the girls’ reactions.
1928, for example, Edgar shared the following thoughts from the stone podium among the trees:

We’ve gone a long way from those pioneer days when flour and salt were the essentials and sugar a luxury. Think of just our breakfast this morning which was a simple one. Pineapple juice from faraway Hawaii. Puffed rice from Japan. Tea. India. Coffee. Brazil. Sugar. Cuba. Orange marmalade. The sunny hills of Italy or California. Imagine the procession that might have walked into our dining room if those people who grew those things for us had brought them to us. . . . We are debtors to all the world. From all corners of the earth the gifts of the peoples of other lands are brought to us. We live in a world where the vast distances are bridged by commerce and transportation, by cables and radios. 53

Interconnectedness was a common theme of these talks, as was the importance of “bridges of friendship” between individuals and nations. 54 For Edgar, camp was a place where girls learned to live in community with those who were different, an invaluable skill in what she saw as an increasingly globalized world. (There is, of course, a certain irony to this objective given the homogeneity of Glen Bernard.) Edgar was not alone in her internationalist outlook. Kristine Alexander has documented a similar ethos, what she calls “imperial internationalism,” in the Girl Guide Movement in the same period. She links this “new international thinking” to “the traumas of the Great War,” the rise of anticolonial nationalism, and changing transportation and communications technologies. 55 Edgar did more than highlight the connections between her charges and “Indian Tea Pickers” or the working-class girls with whom she had worked while in Montreal; she also encouraged the GBC girls to take an active role in the political and social life of their country: “We cannot say we haven’t any part in reshaping the political life of our country. . . . You have a vote to look forward to. . . . It is not too soon to be thinking about great national issues and industrial problems.” 56 I highlight Edgar’s emphasis on the camp’s place within a variety of scaled networks (local, provincial, national, and international) because it demonstrates the kind of community that the director envisioned for Glen Bernard, one cognizant of its connection to other peoples and places. It also sheds light on her priorities for her charges, that they would become globally minded and service-oriented citizens.

54 “Bridges of Friendship” was the title of a talk given August 5, 1934. The term appeared in other talks, including the aforementioned “Pioneering in the World of Today,” August 23, 1928.
56 QUA, 2057/9/1, “No Title,” July 23, 1933. Edgar did not shy away from speaking about world affairs while at camp. The events and effects of the Depression and Second World War were both common themes in her chapel talks. However, the former was not a common theme in The Scroll, suggesting that the girls were personally distant from the effects of the economic crisis perhaps because of their class background.
A key part of this citizenship training entailed encouraging reflexivity among her charges, which Mary Edgar pursued using creative writing. Edgar believed, in particular, that “poetry should have a place in the camp program,” akin to music, art, or dramatics. “The effort to write a poem,” she argued, “often prompts a camper to sit down quietly and alone, to consider with ‘seeing eyes’ the wonder of the world around him.”

She even went so far as to suggest that writing poetry was of “infinitely greater value for an individual than any other experience camp can offer.”

Certainly, the writing of poetry was regarded as an appropriately feminine pursuit in the early twentieth century, although, as Elizabeth Ammons argues, poetry writing among women had ties to both a feminine bourgeois sensibility and a feminist one. That the girls were expected to produce poetry at camp underlines Edgar’s educational background and priorities, and perhaps also a certain class culture. It seems unlikely, for example, that fresh-air camps would have required working-class children to produce poetry.

The scroll was invented by Edgar in 1922 as a way to encourage GBC campers to reflect upon their experiences and then to share them with their peers. Each week, the girls were expected to submit compositions to be read aloud at the Saturday night Council Ring. The weekly ceremony was a touchstone of the Glen Bernard programme, during which the campers gathered amidst the birches in the Glen – the physical and symbolic heart of the camp – “each [girl] with a blanket around her and the group encircling the fire at the centre.”

The ceremony opened with the lighting of the “sacred fire” and prayers by Edgar to the “Great Spirit.” While much of the evening’s festivities were taken up with the telling of Indian legends, contests between the campers, and songs, there was also time devoted to the recitation of “the scrolls” by the tribal Scroll Keepers/Readers. That the scroll was part of the Council Ring ceremony was by no means coincidental; Edgar deemed campfires especially suited to cultivating...
the “appropriate atmosphere” for sharing poetry and prose. At the end of summer, those judged to be the best of the weekly contributions were compiled in a bound volume, *The Scroll*. Thus, the scroll was at once a performed text and a published one. In some years at least, the published version was sold to raise funds to support the Camper’s Club.

Of course, the experiences communicated through the pages of *The Scroll* were refracted a number of times as they passed to print. They were, for example, shaped by the medium itself, moulded to fit the literary conventions of particular genres such as poetry or legends. However, while poetry was encouraged, it was not mandatory. Nor were the girls restricted to particular forms if they chose to write poems. In some cases, campers may have chosen a specific style because it was best suited to the situation or feelings they wished to describe. The context of production was also important in shaping the girls’ compositions. Contributing to the scroll was a compulsory activity at GBC, although not an onerous one – campers were expected to write a minimum of one piece per summer. While some girls clearly enjoyed the experience, as is evidenced by the overrepresentation of certain names in *The Scroll*, others were ambivalent, nervous, or annoyed by the requirement. According to Mary Northway, a “bartering system” developed in connection with the scroll, whereby one girl might write another’s composition in exchange for the completion of a task such as the washing of clothes. That writing for the scroll was a loathed task for some is apparent in the number of poems bemoaning the requirement. Ironically, by writing about their dislike for or anxiety about the scroll, the girls were able to fulfill their obligations:

I’ve racked my brain
I’ve torn my hair,
I’m quite insane,
But I don’t care.

I have to write
For a tribal scroll,
It’s an awful fright,
I’m deep in a hole.

64 QUA, “Poetry in Camp,” n.d.
65 While there was variation in the form and content of the publication over time, the general structure remained relatively constant. It usually opened with a description of the closing week activities and a record of the summer’s award recipients, which were followed by the literary contributions. While some of these were produced by the High Council (camp staff), most were the provenance of campers and included everything from poems and prose to songs and jokes. The final pages of the publication were devoted to the camp directory, advertisements, and, in some of the later editions, updates on former campers and staff.
66 Hereafter, I will use “the scroll” to denote the weekly ritual and *The Scroll* to refer to the published document.
67 “The Glen Bernard Campers’ Club,” *The Scroll*, 1931, pp. 3-4. It is not clear whether this was always the case.
68 Northway admits that she “wrote other people’s Poems for them, for them doing something for me that I couldn’t do very well” (TUA, Interview with Mary L. Northway).
69 “Bunnies Scroll,” *The Scroll*, 1926, p. 44.
That the compositions were written for a very specific audience shaped the kinds of stories that the girls told, as well as the ways in which these stories were narrated. Light-hearted and humorous tales, for instance, were de rigueur in the pages of The Scroll. In some cases, the girls appear to have used humour to discuss sensitive subjects such as health and interpersonal relationships. While the act of performance may have censored some topics and themes, it likely also created conditions of possibility. Compositions tapped into a well of shared experience and understanding, enabling girls to talk about places and experiences that were familiar to their peers.  

Inside jokes, nicknames, and the like all point to a certain degree of intimacy based on common understandings. In other words, through the practice of producing poetry for the scroll, the girls both drew on and reinforced the myriad social relationships that connected them, for better or worse, as a community. Finally, the compositions of the published scroll was fashioned by the process of selection, which was likely overseen by the camp director. Although there is no account of how contributions were chosen or by whom, one imagines that, as with the performed scroll, certain types of stories would have been preferred over others.

With these considerations in mind, The Scroll remains uniquely positioned to contribute to, but also to complicate, our current understanding of camp life in the 1920s and 1930s. On the one hand, it remains one of the few sources in the camping archive to make room for girls’ voices, however mediated, while they were at camp. At the same time, the practice of writing for the scroll also speaks to its possibilities. While we might consider the mandatory nature of the scroll oppressive, especially for the girls who were apprehensive about or uninterested in contributing, as Mary Edgar was well aware, the practice of writing poems and prose encouraged the girls to reflect on their camping experiences, even as they were still at camp. As they contemplated the people and places that demarcated their experiences, but also what being at Glen Bernard meant for them, the girls were actively participating in constructing the communities and landscapes of the camp. Even more importantly, they were sharing these visions of GBC with their peers on a weekly basis. Such articulations of place and community were enacted through the performance of the compositions. Through the scroll, the girls were also engaging in important practices of memory-making, which were further encouraged by Edgar’s persistent framing of summer camp as an experience that would remain with them long after they had left GBC.

This relationship among place, community, and history articulated in the practice of The Scroll again recalls Basso’s work on the Western Apache (Wisdom Sits in Places).

Leslie Paris contends that “nicknames” were particularly important, as they “ritualized new relationships and ways of thinking about community and kinship outside traditional bounds.” They also “testified to the power of camps to permit new roles and identities, and of girls to collaborate in these rites of passage.” See “The Adventures of Peanut and Bo: Summer Camps and Early-Twentieth-Century American Girlhood,” Journal of Women’s History, vol. 12, no. 4 (Winter 2001), p. 60.

This is a persistent theme in Edgar’s writing. For example, in “To An Old Camper,” she writes: “You may think, my dear, when you grow quite old, You have left camp days behind, But I know the scent of wood smoke, Will always call to mind, Little fires at twilight, And trails you used to find. For once you have been a camper, Then something has come to stay, Deep in your heart forever, Which nothing can take away.” See Mary S. Edgar, Wood-fire and Candle-light (Toronto: Macmillan Company of Canada Limited, 1945), pp. 71-72.
Scroll allows an exploration of personal perceptions and experiences of space and place through an examination of compositions authored by individuals, while a consideration of these compositions as artifacts of the weekly Council Ring meetings permits the historian to begin to reconstruct practices of place- and community-making. Both of these uses are explored further as I analyse the poems and prose of The Scroll to recreate the everyday life of girls at camp.

The Everyday Life of Camp
Summer camp in the interwar years was an intensely social experience that necessitated living in community and place for four or eight weeks. As a result of the relatively long period of time spent at camp as well as the kinds of activities on offer, campers were keenly attuned to the bounds of community, but also to the particularities of place. At Glen Bernard, the institutional structure and patterns of social organization that gave shape to the camp experience were deeply spatialized, by which I mean they were anchored in particular spaces and places. Likewise, the ways in which the girls experienced and interpreted the camp as a spatial entity were indivisible from the people and relationships that were a part of these encounters.73 The camp as place was embedded in a web of social relations inflected with class, gender, and race. In the 1920s and 1930s, GBC had three primary categories of identification based on age, tribe, and cabin group.74 As we shall see, these categories were not merely social; they were also inscribed on the camp landscape.

Beginning in 1924, the first year that Glen Bernard was accessible to girls under the age of 12, the most basic division at GBC was between the senior and junior campers.75 The Senior Camp, which was further divided into intermediate and senior campers, was restricted to girls aged 12 to 17, while the Junior Camp served girls 9 to 11 with a few exceptions.76 Edgar, following on her belief in the value of age-specific activities, was committed to keeping the two sections separate,77 a practice materialized in the physical organization of the camp.78 Senior campers took their meals in the original dining hall, which sat at the top of a hill in the centre of camp, and slept in tents and cabins scattered around the eastern end of the site. Meanwhile junior campers, or “Bunnies,”

73 This echoes Dolores Hayden’s contention that “social relationships are intertwined with spatial perception.” See *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995), p. 16.
74 According to Mary Northway’s 1940 study of social development at Glen Bernard, there were a number of secondary groups to which girls could belong: activity groups, which were formed based on interest; canoe trip groups, which were selected “based on age, ability, experience, and congeniality”; table groups at meal times, which changed weekly; and “spontaneous groups,” which developed within the context of specific activities (*Appraisal of the Social Development*, pp. 13-14).
75 Leslie Paris maintains that “at a time when few camps were coeducational and fewer still were interracial, age remained camps’ single most important organizing distinction” (*Children’s Nature*, p. 113).
76 For example, Muriel Ross, author of “The Truck Ride,” is denoted as being “Age 7” (*The Scroll*, 1928, p. 45).
77 Edgar’s emphasis on age-specific activities fits with theories and practices of contemporary child psychology. See “Making Modern Childhood the Natural Way” in Wall, *The Nurture of Nature*, pp. 140-174.
78 The physical ordering of the camp echoes Leslie Paris’s contention that “camps gave material form to different stages of childhood” (*The Adventures of Peanut and Bo,* p. 48).
ate in “The Hutch,” a multi-purpose facility located on the west side of the camp, and slept in one of seven cabins encircling the building.\textsuperscript{79} To a degree, the two groups also had separate programme spaces. Poems from the Bunny \textit{Scroll}, for example, describe locations that were the exclusive domain of junior campers, including a waterfront area with a slide, a Council Ring, and the Wendy House.\textsuperscript{80} The latter was a small cabin on stilts, where Bunnies could sleep for two nights each summer, a much anticipated and cherished outing for the younger campers.\textsuperscript{81}

The dividing line between the two groups was by no means impermeable. For example, “Camp Fun” describes an evening when the Bunnies went to the Lodge to “see the seniors act,”\textsuperscript{82} while “Lunch at the Hutch” suggests that senior campers were occasionally invited to sup with the juniors.\textsuperscript{83} In the latter, the author, a senior, comments specifically on her position as a role model for the younger campers. The two groups also intermingled occasionally during camp-wide activities such as regattas. While these age-based categories were constructed by the director, the physical and ideological separation of the two groups appears to have been internalized by the girls, who identified themselves and their peers in the pages of \textit{The Scroll} as seniors, “intermedes,” and Bunnies.\textsuperscript{84} Meanwhile, poems such as “Ode to the High Mightiness of Seniors” gave voice to the physical and conceptual distance that separated the two groups:

\begin{quote}
I’ve wished I might sit at your table,
Or else belong to your tent,
I’ve wished that I could be able,
To go wherever you went…
But oh you are almost twenty.
And I – not quite fourteen.
I’ve wished that I could take you
Out paddling in the bay,
I’ve wished that I could make you
Just happy all the day.
I’ve wished that you had meant me
Your tent-mate to have been…\textsuperscript{85}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{79} “Seven Little Cabins,” \textit{The Scroll}, 1925, p. 59.
\textsuperscript{82} “Camp Fun,” \textit{The Scroll}, 1931, p. 33.
\textsuperscript{83} “Lunch at the Hutch,” \textit{The Scroll}, 1925, p. 50.
\textsuperscript{84} Here I am reminded of Bruce Curtis’s contention that categories constructed for the census took on meaning for those being enumerated. See \textit{The Politics of Population: State Formation, Statistics, and the Census of Canada, 1840-1874} (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001).
\textsuperscript{85} “Ode to the High Mightiness of Seniors,” \textit{The Scroll}, 1925, p. 43.
These lines also offer what appears to be a publicly announced crush. Other contributions to The Scroll describe similar feelings. The following excerpt from a 1927 poem, for example, provided girls some assistance in identifying such sentiments:

Does your heart go all a-flutter
When you see her passing by?
Do you move your lips and mutter
Or heave a mighty sigh?
When you’re sitting at her table
And you cannot eat a bite
It’s because she’s right beside you
And you’ve lost your appetite?
Do you watch her every movement
When she sees you – do you blush?
If you find you have these symptoms
Then I fear you have a crush.86

Leslie Paris argues that “single-sex ‘crushes,’ expressions of special affection or desire, had long been a feature of camps, particularly at girls’ camps, where for decades girls and women had long enjoyed openly close and loving ties.”87 By contrast, Sharon Wall contends that “same-sex attachments were one of the long-recognized dangers of camp.”88 As early as 1928, counsellors at Canadian summer camps for boys were being warned about the threat of homosocial intimacies.89 By the late 1930s, counsellor training courses for women were tackling the subject of crushes directly. The concern that “seemingly innocent crushes could take on ‘pathological proportions’” led teachers at the Margaret Eaton School in Toronto to encourage counsellors-in-training to “balance the [camper’s] need for affection” against “the danger of unhealthy attachments.”90 These conflicting characterizations of sexuality at summer camp may reflect different institutional approaches to the question of intimacy or interpretive divergences among historians. It is possible that the GBC poems, which were penned in the late 1920s, emerged at a time when a crush remained in the realm of the quotidian.91 It is

89 Such concerns may have developed earlier and more forcefully at boys camps.
91 Cameron Duder captures some of this temporal ambiguity in Awfully Devoted Women: Lesbian Lives in Canada, 1900-1965 (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2010). While the opening decades of the twentieth century were a period of growing anxiety about homosocial affection and proper heterosexual development, Duder maintains that “[l]esbian women were, to many Canadians, virtually unknown until the postwar period; in large part because “women were assumed to be incapable of the same nature and degree of sexual passion as men” making it “inconceivable to many that they could desire each other and could engage in same sex sexual activity” (pp. 24-25).
also possible that the director and camp staff at Glen Bernard had a more positive attitude toward homosocial intimacies than staff at other camps.92

Further social differentiation and identification were encouraged by the tribal structure, one of the many manifestations of “playing Indian” at Glen Bernard. Between 1924 and 1933, there were six tribes at GBC composed of girls from different age and cabin groups, with separate tribes for senior and junior campers. Each tribe was governed by a tribal council, which, as the following account suggests, was “democratically elected” at the beginning of the summer:

Because inauspiciously had the Rain God poured his torrents upon Majestic Tuscarora [Rock], the meeting place of the mighty Chinooks, thus to the great Wigwam came the braves. By common consent then did they declare the flower of their tribe to be the stately waxen Indian Pipe growing in the deep green moss of the vales of Glen Bernard, and their colours to be the white of the flying clouds and the green of the verdant moss and trees. Then did they choose those who would lead their tribe in song and story, and in feats of daring upon land and after, the brave who should communicate with the tribes, and who should keep ever blazing the fire of the council ring.93

Aside from the aforementioned Scroll Keeper who was responsible for assembling and reciting her tribe’s weekly contributions to the Council Ring, the girls might appoint a “Tribal Chief” who took on the primary leadership role in the group, a “Sport Captain” who oversaw participation in intertribal competitions, a “Fire Tender” who played a role in the Council Ring ceremony, and a “Runner” who was responsible for undertaking errands for the older girls. The names of the tribes, which changed annually, were chosen by the girls.94 Former GBC camper and camp director Barbara Gilchrist recalled that Edgar encouraged her charges to refer to the appropriate literature when choosing their tribal names and songs so as to be accurate.95 However, names like the “Minobes” suggest that they did not always comply.

Wall argues that council structures were a common feature of private summer camps, which were committed to instilling democratic values in their campers.96 This was captured in a 1922 report on GBC by the *Hamilton Spectator*: “The camp for teen age girls is ‘governed’ as though it were a little democratic country. The girls have the opportunity of learning the first principles of public citizenship.”97 The campers also made connections between their tribal elections and formal politics. Referring to their elections, the members of a 1930 tribe reported...

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92 There is other evidence to suggest a range of attitudes towards crushes at Canadian summer camps. For example, a Tanamakoon camper wrote quite openly about an intense crush and possible relationship that she developed with a female counsellor in letters sent to her mother between 1933 and 1940 (TUA, 03-008, Mary Williamson Fonds).


94 The 1924 tribes were: Algonquin, Ojibway, Iroquois, and Huron. The 1925 tribes were the Crees, Senecas, Mohicans, and Dacotahs.

95 TUA, 83-002/5/8, Interview with Barbara Gilchrist, November 6, 1986.


(tongue-in-cheek) that “Much to our disgust, Mr. King and Mr. Bennett were not present. Also, the Sundridge Standard did not issue an extra, which hurt us to the core of our hearts.” Edgar believed that tribes “[stimulated] a healthy rivalry in sport and in many other ways.” These groups were pitted against one another at the camp-wide regattas, as well as at the council rings, where the girls performed “challenges.” Particularly in the Senior Camp, tribes also appear to have shifted some of the responsibility for moulding and governing camper behaviour from the director and counsellors to the older campers. This “devolution” of responsibility had the potential both to strengthen relations between the girls and to produce conflict. In other words, tribes functioned as a community within a community, with their own structures, roles, and expectations.

Figure 2: Glen Bernard campers gathered at a tribal meeting. This photograph was featured on the first page of the 1924 Scroll. (TUA, Ontario Camping Association Fonds, 72-007/1/3).

Tribes, like the age-based divisions at Glen Bernard, gave further shape to the camp’s imagined geography. As the aforementioned account of the Chinooks’ first gathering makes clear, each tribe had its own meeting place, which the group chose at the beginning of the summer (see Figure 2). In some cases,

99 QUA, Glen Bernard Camp Brochure, 1924.
100 Paris makes clear that camp, while having the potential to offer children a camp family, was also characterized by “intergenerational and interpersonal tension” (“Between Generations: Tensions in the Camp ‘Family’” in Children’s Nature, pp. 132-162).
these sites overlay existing “places” at camp such as Tuscarora Rock. In other cases, they were identifiable by their proximity to a notable feature in the landscape such as a stream or “the mighty rock by the singing waterfall.”101 A note in Mary Northway’s study suggested that the groups met daily for half an hour at this location, although it is unclear how they passed the time. Nonetheless, this daily contact and the social relationships associated with the meeting place likely meant that the site held enduring significance (positive or negative) for the girls. This situation recalls the notion of “dwelling” articulated by Keith Basso, who borrows from Martin Heidegger. According to Basso, dwelling “consist[s] of the multiple ‘lived relationships’ that people maintain with places, for it is solely by virtue of these relationships that space acquires meaning.”102 Moreover, “[w]hen places are actively sensed, the physical landscape becomes wedded to the landscape of the mind, to the roving imagination.”103 This practice of actively sensing place was characteristic of camp life beyond the bounds of the tribal groups. Camp, particularly through its repetitive schedule, supported particular patterns of moving through and inhabiting its spaces, while the emphasis on reflexivity that permeated the practices of The Scroll, Council Ring ceremonies, and chapel talks encouraged girls to be cognizant of being in place.

The final category of identification was a cabin or tent group. In the early years, tents and cabins typically accommodated between three and five campers with counsellors sleeping in similar structures nearby.104 Bee Symons’s “Our Cabin” offers a sense of the construction and aesthetic of the cabins at GBC:

Its walls are made of tree trunks,
And chinked with fresh green moss,
We all do our share of chinking,
And think ourselves the boss.105

Symons also calls attention to the cabin’s “wide verandah” and the “two large windows.” Tents are mentioned less frequently. However, given the ubiquity of these structures in this period, we can reasonably assume that the girls were housed in canvas wall tents, “rectangular tents with a ridge pole supported by upright poles front and back and having low side walls of canvas secured by guy ropes.”106

101 “From the Scroll of the Dacotah Tribe,” The Scroll, 1925, p. 44.
102 Basso, Wisdom Sits in Places, p. 106.
103 Ibid., p. 107.
104 By 1940, cabin groups appear to have been formed “largely on the basis of campers’ and parents’ requests for associates” (Northway, Appraisal of the Social Development, p. 13). It is unclear as to the arrangement prior to this time.
105 The Scroll, 1928, p. 44.
106 Van Slyck argues that, for children attending summer camps in this period, the “tents were an abrupt departure from the comforts of home” in large part because of the makeshift bedding (A Manufactured Wilderness, pp. 100-101).
Both structures represented points of contact between the natural world and
domestic space.\(^{107}\) Cabins, for instance, were constructed in a rustic style, featured
large and frequently open windows, and were described as being tucked in among
the trees. Tents, while similarly situated, were, in their relative impermanency,
more subject to the vagaries of climate, as the following poem attests:

The canvas was a-flapping,
And the poles were all askew
And the noise that raged around them
Would surely deafen you,
So they rushed around unheeding
And one stepped on a tack
And one all tangled up in ropes,
Lay squirming on her back.\(^{108}\)

Tents also recalled the experiences of canoe and camping trips, which were deeply
embedded in the natural world. Both structures, however, were also very clearly
domestic spaces. This is evident in the emphasis placed on “cabin neatness.” The
cleaning of cabins and subsequent inspections by a staff member were built into
the structure of the camp day, typically taking place after breakfast and culminat-
ing in an award for housekeeping at the end of the summer. The cabin as a domestic
space is also palpable in poems describing “wild” animals that crossed the thresh-
hold and were thus “out of place.” For example, “The Ballad of the Bat” relays the
tale of a run-in with a bat in Wawatausee cabin, while “Our Visitors” describes the
squirrels that visited Asumaya “late at night” to “eat up every bite,” including “a
watch, a toothbrush, And Edie’s bright green tie.”\(^{109}\) It was a porous boundary that
divided the natural from the domestic in relation to cabins and tents, a point rein-
forced in selections that describe the rudimentary architecture of both structures.\(^{110}\)
Both “Drip! Drip! Drip!” and “Rain” bemoan leaky roofs on rainy days, while an
untitled poem, which describes all the implements necessary for staying warm at
night, including a “fur-lined coat,” “ten blankets wide,” and hot water bottles all
around, alludes to the fact that cabins and tents could be cold.\(^{111}\)

At a functional level, cabins and tents served as living quarters for campers.
However, these spaces also served as important sites of social interaction.\(^{112}\) For
example, “A Tale of the Night” and “When Lights are Low” both point to the

\(^{107}\) Paris similarly contends that “camp architecture suggested a middle ground between the natural world and
civilization” (\textit{Children’s Nature}, p. 103). Here, however, I wish to emphasize the “natural” domesticity of
the architecture.


\(^{110}\) A similar argument could be made about the dining hall (“Untitled,” \textit{The Scroll}, 1930, p. 32).


\(^{112}\) Northway described the cabin group as “comparable to the home or family in the city. It is the children’s
basic group” (\textit{Appraisal of the Social Development}, p. 13).
chatter that erupted among the girls after lights out, chatter that could draw the ire of their counsellors. Similarly, “Our Country Club” describes the cabin as a place where the girls gather with friends, play, and “take tea.” This composition is also interesting for the ways in which it likens the cabin to the social space of the country club, a comparison that reveals the class bias of the private summer camp. We might read such play as reproducing the gendered behaviours and identities of the ruling class. However, we might also understand such practices as the girls exploring identity through performance and play, just as they would the identities of the Indians. While their class and race privilege gave them the freedom to try on and abandon such identities at will, their identities were not fixed, but remained in formation.

While shared living space was the primary point of contact among cabin mates, contributions to The Scroll reveal that such interactions were not limited to the physical space of the cabin. On the contrary, cabin groups, like tribes although on a smaller scale, operated as communities within the larger community. “A Wet Day,” for example, describes how one cabin, Olahwan, “resolved to entertain” themselves in spite of the rain, so they went for a group hike, while the following poem reveals how cabin groups developed identities recognizable to other campers:

There is a Camp in Canada  
Between the East and West,  
And in that Camp one cabin  
Was worse than all the rest.  
Before inspection time came round  
They never made their beds,  
Or swept the floor or tidied up,  
The stupid, sleepy heads!  
But once, – behold, what wonders!  
They tidied up the muss  
And to the Camp’s complete surprise  
That cabin got ten plus!  

This poem also hints at the ways in which campers resisted rules, in this case guidelines for cleanliness.

The cabin as a category of social organization offered the girls an “imagined community,” which is to say that they perceived themselves as members of Wawatausee or Asumaya and thus as related to, for better or worse, the other girls.

113 “A Tale of the Night,” The Scroll, 1931, p. 10; “When the Lights are Low,” The Scroll, 1924, p. 28.  
114 “Our Country Club,” The Scroll, 1933, p. 25. There is a similar feel to “Social Event,” in which the girls sought to reproduce a formal tea in their cabin with limited resources (The Scroll, 1930, p. 11).  
115 The girls were cognizant of the fact that they were playing. Consider, for example, a poem from 1931, in which the “I” in “Keewaydin” stood for “Indians, we all imitate” (The Scroll, 1931, p. 24).  
116 “A Wet Day,” The Scroll, 1928, p. 27.  
who were members of the same cabin. Furthermore, the physical space of the
cabins and tents, their organization, and the materials used in their construction
further promoted physical and emotional intimacy among cabin mates. Neither
cabins nor tents were large structures. Often they were only big enough for
a handful of beds and the trunks that ferried the girls’ personal effects from home
to camp. The tight space forced girls to be in close proximity to one another,
making it difficult to maintain a sense of privacy. Moreover, the very materials
with which cabins and tents were constructed meant that girls had to whisper or
they could easily be heard by others, a practice that further encouraged intimacy
by bringing girls into close physical contact with one another. The fact that coun-
sellors slept elsewhere and that cabins and tents were somewhat removed from
one another also offered the girls as a group a certain degree of isolation from
the prying eyes of other campers or their counsellors. While the poems in The
Scroll emphasize the close ties that developed within this space, this seclusion
could also hide more negative interactions. As Leslie Paris has shown, “at
times, a playful peer culture shaded into bullying and harassment.” Neither
in The Scroll nor elsewhere in the archive is there evidence that this was true of
cabin life at GBC. We should not, however, assume that this silence negates the
possibility of its existence.

While the natural and built environments and social assemblages such as
cabin groups and tribal councils gave shape to the girls’ experiences of Glen
Bernard, there was also an important temporal aspect to camp life. Former
campers paint the early years of Glen Bernard as years of flexibility. However,
y by 1925, life at GBC was characterized not so much by freedom and
autonomy as by structure. The girls were called from their beds in the morning
by the camp horn, a “technological innovation” reminiscent of the bells that
began to demarcate the school day at the turn-of-the-century. “Ode to the
Camp Horn” suggests that not all of the campers were enamoured with the
early wake-up:

When the sky in the east is yet rosy,
And we’re in our beds warm and cosy,

118 Although I am borrowing “imagined community” from Benedict Anderson, I am using it in a different way
to describe the manner in which the built environment (a cabin) gave shape to patterns of identification
among girls who might have had little in common otherwise. See Imagined Communities: Reflection on the
119 Leslie Paris has made a similar observation: “Many tent and cabin groups developed their own nicknames
and private jokes, while close friendships (and sometimes bitter rivalries) were forged within these shared
quarters” (Children’s Nature, p. 110).
120 There is a reference to gossiping after lights out when the counsellor was not present in “A Simple Story,”
although this particular story is more likely a morality tale than an account of actual events (The Scroll,
1930, p. 10).
122 TUA, “Recollections of the First Years of the Glen Bernard Camp.”
123 Paul Axelrod, The Promise of Schooling: Education in Canada, 1800-1914 (Toronto: University of Toronto
When everyone’s still feeling dosey
You honk without rhyme or reason.  

The first activity of the day was a morning dip, after which the girls returned to their cabins to change before gathering at the flagpole in the centre of camp, a common performance of citizenship at Canadian and American camps. Although The Scroll includes poems about girls who slept through this ritual, another indication of opposition to the early mornings, we can assume that the majority of campers were present on a daily basis. After breakfast in their respective dining halls, the juniors and seniors returned to their cabins once more to prepare for cabin inspection. The rest of the morning was spent in activities.

Glen Bernard offered a range of activities consistent with other Ontario private camps. These included an emphasis on water-based pursuits, such as swimming and canoeing, although land sports such as basketball and baseball were also part of the schedule. Much as in public schools in the early twentieth century, there was a commitment to teaching campers about the natural world through “nature study.” Campcraft, meanwhile, introduced the girls to skills useful on out trips, such as fire-building. Finally, activities such as drama, dance, and music promoted the exercise of creative faculties. The camp programme, like the landscape, was never static. While some activities such as swimming, canoeing, and campcraft were core parts of the “curriculum,” others such as photography, horseback riding, and golf came and went. This list suggests the privileged status of the camp. Not only did the children who attended the fresh-air camps described by Sharon Wall not have access to activities such as golfing and horseback riding, but, even at GBC, those who wished to ride horses, for example, had to pay extra to do so, revealing cleavages among the campers.

Camp activities took the girls to various corners of the property and in doing so contributed to their “sense of place.” Swimming and canoeing lessons were conducted on the camp’s waterfront, which featured a dock with a diving tower.

126 “Those Sleepy Campers,” The Scroll, 1924, p. 27.
130 Palm, Legacy to a Camper, p. 14.
131 The golf programme, for example, was instituted in 1923 because pioneering golfer Ada Mackenzie had agreed to spend her summer at GBC (Palm, Legacy to a Camper, p. 17). It is likely that Mary and Ada met while students at Havergal College in the first decade of the twentieth century, underscoring the networks of privilege upon which private schools and camps drew and which they reinforced. See Bruce Kidd, The Struggle for Canadian Sport (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), p. 111.
132 In 1929, the first summer that riding was an option, riding was an extra $50 for the summer or $30 for four weeks (Palm, Legacy to a Camper, p. 26).
and a sandy beach. Canoe lessons included technical instruction that took place in the vicinity of the dock, as well as excursions out into the lake or along the shoreline. A number of the poems describe the views from a canoe:

Out on the lake, in a slender canoe,
When the sky above is a shimmering blue,
And the lake is a glorious silver sheen,
And the trees on the shore are a glossy green.

Golf classes, which were for a time overseen by Canadian golf champion Ada Mackenzie, took place at the small course on the eastern side of camp beyond the senior cabins. The “Nature Study” programme, by contrast, found the girls ranging through

... woods and swamps and meadows,
Seeking birds, insects, and flowers,
Fungi, ferns and furry creatures, –
All the “growing things” that flourish
In the vast extent of acres
That we claim for Camp Glen Bernard.

The introduction of riding classes in 1929 allowed some of the girls to go even further afield, exploring the camp landscape from the backs of horses. Even theatre and dance classes were conducted outside, as were performances, reflecting Edgar’s belief in the value of life in the out-of-doors. However, these lessons were occasionally held in the activity rooms of the Hutch for juniors and in the Lodge for seniors, which were also the spaces used for arts and crafts.

The campers’ responses to activities and instruction are mixed. On the one hand, they hint at the sense of pride that accompanied mastery in a given activity. However, they also express frustration over the emphasis on achievement. Tensions between these two opinions are captured in poems published alongside one another in the 1925 edition of The Scroll. In the first, entitled “My Knowledge,” the author proudly recounts the many things she has learned while at camp in the areas of swimming, canoeing, and arts and crafts. By contrast, the second, tellingly entitled “Cross Section of a Camper’s Mind During Class in ‘Pathetic Prancing’,” conveys annoyance with the activity. Not only was the

133 The diving tower is mentioned in “A Soliloquy” (The Scroll, 1927, p. 33), while the latter is described in “The Beach” (The Scroll, 1924, p. 35).
135 The location and layout of the “golf course” receives mention in “The Surroundings of Camp,” The Scroll, 1924, p. 36.
138 “The Close of Camp,” The Scroll, 1928, p. 7. There are also photographs of outdoor performances in the TUA.
dance complicated, but the author tired of being kicked by others. The latter poem, in particular, uses humour to push against the expectations of the instructor, and ultimately the director.

Lunch in the dining hall was followed by a rest time. Edgar outlined her expectations for the rest hour in a poem of a similar name:

This is your hour – a time to rest
'Neath roof, or tree, or sky.
A precious hour, your very own,
A chance to close an eye.

However, as a number of Scroll contributions make clear, rest hour did not always live up to its name:

At rest hour, it is sad to tell,
We do not rest so very well,
We sometimes sing, or laugh or talk,
Or sometimes even take a walk,
But when we’re told, “You’ll miss your swim,”
We shut our mouths with all our vim.

While this poem alludes to the fact that counsellors as authority figures had recourse to encourage compliance, it also reveals another way in which the cabin supported and encouraged social interaction in spite of instructions to the contrary.

The schedule for the rest of the day is less clear. Afternoons appear to have also been time for instruction, followed by a free swim time before dinner. There are numerous poems about gathering on the hill to watch the sunset, which suggests that this was a frequent after-dinner occurrence if not a daily activity. Campfires were another common evening activity. One thing is clear, however. The day ended with the girls gathering once again at the flagpole to say goodnight by singing Taps:

Day is done, gone the sun,
From the lakes, from the hills, from the sky.
All is well, safely rest,
God is nigh.

It is significant that the camp day began and ended with communal activities: flag raising and taps. On the one hand, these ritual activities, which offered

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141 “Rest Hour,” The Scroll, 1932, p. 27.
recognizable structure and consistency, gave shape to the campers’ days. In
drawing the girls together, they also provided a very tangible demonstration of
the camp community. To borrow from Gillian Poulter, this practice helped the
girls “envision community,” thus reinforcing their ties to one another despite
differences.144

Weekly patterns varied from the daily rhythm of the camp schedule. Week-
ends offered a welcome break from instructional classes. They also provided
more opportunities for larger gatherings. Saturdays mornings, for example, often
featured camp-wide activities such as regattas,145 while Saturday evenings were
devoted to the aforementioned Council Ring ceremony:146

Every week on Saturday night
Our Council Fire is burning bright
Along a winding path we go
Where trees are standing in a row.

First the tribal scrolls are read,
When we have such fun
With “contests” or camp-songs instead,
Then file home, one by one.147

In addition to the reading of the scrolls and the singing of camp songs, the Council
Ring ceremony frequently featured Mary Edgar sharing her own “Indian” leg-
ends with the girls.148 The girls produced similar tales, which were published in
_The Scroll_.149 These legends underscore the director’s and campers’ participation
in the entangled practices of forging community and place. These legends pro-
vided histories for sites on the camp property, such as “Altar Rock,” “The Glen,”
and “Tuscarora Rock.”150 They also frequently framed the girls as the inheri-
tors of Native lands and customs.151 This appropriation of Aboriginal identity is
clear in “Our Ancestors,” which describes the campers as “the loyal followers”
of the “great and mighty tribes” who “lived in the vast areas of forest” on the
shores of Lake Bernard long “before the white man.”152 Following anthropologist
Keith Basso, we might think about these stories about the landscape, or acts of

144 Gillian Poulter, _Becoming Native in a Foreign Land: Sport, Visual Culture, and Identity in Montreal, 1840-
1885_ (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press), pp. 5-6. My use of “envisioning community”
departs somewhat from that of Poulter, who uses the term to describe the ways in which images were
employed to represent visually an imagined community.
146 QUA, _Glen Bernard Camp Brochure_, 1923.
148 Palm, _Legacy to a Camper_, p. 53.
place-making, as “a way of constructing the past,” but also as “a way of constructing social traditions and, in the process, personal and social identities.” In this way, the practices of place- and community-making were intimately intertwined. Of course, such stories, which centred on claiming others’ pasts as their own, contributed to the construction of GBC as a white place and community. They were, in other words, part of the often covert violence of colonialism, discursive acts of possession that resulted in material acts of dispossession.

On Sunday mornings, the girls attended services in the outdoor chapel. During the camp’s first year, local ministers presided over these services. In subsequent years, Edgar took charge. Her chapel talks, as I noted earlier, offered a number of cues as to her expectations of and goals for the girls. The Saturday night and Sunday morning rituals did more than just bring the girls together. They also offered opportunities for communal sacred experiences, which reinforced the bounds and bonds of community.

The camp schedule was an important source of structure that further shaped practices of place- and community-making. First, the schedule delineated the temporal limits of social interaction (although it could presumably be resisted), namely, it brought certain permutations of girls and staff into contact with each other at certain times, thus facilitating particular kinds and networks of relationships. For example, mornings were spent with those who shared instructional groups, while rest hour was passed with cabin mates. Similarly, the content of the schedule and the locations where these activities took place provided the context for social interactions and the relationships that grew out of them. Presumably, girls related to each other differently as they faced the challenge of operating a canoe than when they shared a meal. Finally, the schedule encouraged particular patterns of place awareness. As the following poem captures perfectly, the daily schedule took the girls along the same paths, day after day, and in so doing facilitated a deep knowledge of place:

There is a well-worn trail that lies in Camp,  
Up which our feet so often tramp,  
When the day is hot that hill we dread,  
For the way is long, and our feet are lead;  
But when you get to the end of the climb,  
There’s a good meal waiting every time.  
Up that trail I’ll be winding soon,  
For it’s the trail to the dining-room.

To be sure, the spaces and places of camp did not only provide a landscape for social relations or play a role in fashioning such relations. In some cases, a particular place or kind of space was the subject of a relationship, as is evidenced

156 TUA, “Mary Northway’s Recollections.”  
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by the myriad poems describing a personal and often solitary interaction with a part of the camp landscape, such as the shoreline, a particular stand of trees, or a cabin. The importance of place is further captured in poems in which the author bids adieu to particular parts of the campsite, such as “the chapel on the hill,” the “dear little cabin,” and the “little lost paths and trails” in “Saying Good-Bye.”

There were, however, “exceptions” to the schedule, and these too were important in manufacturing place and community. For example, canoe and camping trips, which tended to be conducted in August, were a focal part of the Glen Bernard programme from the very beginning. “Out trips” introduced girls to new landscapes thereby extending the space of the camp. They also limited the pool of available partners for social interaction, which had the potential to strengthen ties with one’s fellow campers or to exacerbate an already antagonistic relationship. Mary Edgar, well known for being somewhat eccentric, also worked special days into the camp programme over the course of the summer. For example, “Pippa Days,” which were fashioned after Robert Browning’s poem “Pippa Passes,” freed counsellors from their responsibilities for campers to do other administrative work. Edgar told her charges in 1932, “When I first thought of the idea . . . I did it because most of your days are mapped out for you. Your school days are nearly all scheduled, one period after another. You follow a time table most of the time for nearly ten months of the year. Here at camp, you should have some time that is your very own.” For much of the Senior Camp, this resulted in “One whole day . . . For us to use it as we choose.”

The campers all their lunches did take,
Some went to the woods and some to the lake.
Some in group or alone they went,
But no matter how, it was a day well spent
... Oh one felt so near to the real things of life
On that beautiful Pippa Day.

However, some of the older campers spent the day on the western side of the camp minding the Bunnies, another example of the devolution of responsibility for the juniors into the hands of older campers. Other special activities that appear in *The Scroll* are “Vagabond Day,” during which each camper was given

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159 *The Scroll*, 1929, p. 20.
160 I use this term carefully because most were not entirely unexpected or unfamiliar departures from the routine.
162 QUA, 2057/9/1, “The Story of Pippa,” August 21, 1932. Edgar faced opposition from some who were concerned about the girls’ safety. She not only maintained that she had confidence in the girls, but she believed that “[n]o one has ever spoiled it by doing wild or crazy things. I won’t say that some campers haven’t used their day foolishly or stupidly – but to some girls it has meant a real holiday – or holy day.”
lunch wrapped in a bandana and tied to a stick and was able to “wander anywhere within an area described, returning by a certain time,” and “Gypsy Day,” which featured “gaily-clad gypsies” sitting “in tents or by little fires” telling fortunes to the campers sporting “hankies red and yellow” that happened by. That such activities were particularly popular when the Great Depression was in full swing speaks to the class-based advantage that this group of girls boasted. “Gypsy Day” and “Vagabond Day,” in other words, were two days when privileged campers arguably “played poor” in ways that bore a resemblance to the “Indian play” they engaged in at other times. Just as these privileged campers could put on and take off the trappings of indigeneity at will, they could do the same with the accoutrements of poverty.

Not surprisingly, such readings are not present in the girls’ writing. Rather, their responses highlight a number of other themes. First, they express delight in the change of pace that theme days afforded, adding weight to the contention that camps were places of structure even in their formative years. These special days were not only a departure from the usual programme, however, but also from the more familiar spaces of camp, providing opportunities for the campers to roam and explore locales beyond the centre of the camp, which augmented their knowledge of the site. Secondly, these events offered campers a greater degree of autonomy and, in some cases, time alone. Consider, for example, “My Day”:

I have a day!
It’s my very own.
So away I go
To be alone.

That the pleasures of time spent alone are a frequent theme of The Scroll suggests that the communal aspect of camp life could be stultifying and thus not inherently positive. Moreover, it reveals how opportunities for solitude were built into the fabric of camp in a way that no longer holds true in current camping practice. At the same time, special days also encouraged social mixing by bringing campers together in new ways that did not necessarily conform to the established social structures and networks of the camp. As such days frequently featured dressing up, playacting, or both, they also permitted girls to try on new roles and identities within the context of the camp community.

165 Palm, *Legacy to a Camper*, p. 42.
168 *The Scroll*, 1929, p. 18.
169 These latter points in particular echo Leslie Paris’s discussion of camp rituals at American institutions, although she places more emphasis on the ways in which such rituals “subverted or parodied” the “centrality of age as a category of difference.” See the section entitled “Age Cohorts and Intergenerational Play” in *Children’s Nature*, pp. 107-113.
The Weight of Place and Community

One of the strengths of the writing in *The Scroll* as a historical source is the light it sheds on the more prosaic details of camp life such as wash-day, bathing practices, sickness, and letter-writing. Such details are largely absent from other primary sources, as well as from scholars’ accounts of summer camp. I was struck, in particular, by the handful of compositions pertaining to body image. Poems about weight gain and loss while at camp address the two central themes of this article: community and place. On the one hand, their presence in *The Scroll* underscores the existence of multiple networks of community regulation at camp. Specifically, these poems draw attention to the girls’ own participation in the production and reproduction of community boundaries and values. As campers described the growing and shrinking waistlines of their peers, as they offered advice about how to avoid such fluctuations, and as they passed judgment on those who appeared unwilling or incapable of following such advice, they were taking part in the identification and dissemination of acceptable camp behaviour. Of course, such norms at camps were shaped by the girls’ experiences at home. Seeing each other’s bodies at camp was a way of seeing the body learned elsewhere. On the other hand, the camp experience produced particular kinds of bodies, which the girls described in their poetry. In addition to being sun-tanned, these were typically understood as being heavier bodies because of dining hall food, but also more athletic bodies because of the daily exercise.

The girls’ bodies, in other words, can be read through the lens of place, revealing the specificities of location in physically sculpting bodies, but also in shaping perceptions. Poems about body image and weight reveal how deeply connected the two worlds of home and camp were through bodily ideals and fleshy materiality. Not only did girls arrive at camp in bodies moulded by contemporary culture and their experiences in the domestic spaces, streets, and school hallways of Toronto, but eventually they returned home in bodies that bore the imprint of their time at camp, including exposure to the sun, the kinds and quantities of food eaten, and the amount and form of physical activity undertaken. Moreover, their perceptions of these material changes were shaped by the intersecting realms of home and camp and the values that characterized both.

Susan Miller argues that, at early-twentieth-century American girls’ camps, “[n]o part of the ‘physical program’ ... received more attention, was measured as often, and was charted as meticulously as girls’ weight.” She also notes a growing preoccupation with “fat” campers and the increasing prevalence of discourses equating health and attractiveness with slim bodies. Yet Edgar’s writings are largely silent on the issue. In a 1934 chapel talk she offered her charges


171 In “A Recipe for Making a Most Delicious Summer,” Edith McCollum instructs her reader that, “[w]hen thoroughly brown and risen to twice their normal size, remove [the campers] and send them back to the city to be tested” (*The Scroll*, 1925, p. 30). See also “When We Leave Camp,” *The Scroll*, 1924, p. 22.

the following thoughts: “Health is something to guard, not to recklessly squan-
der. Girls are often foolish – more often than boys. I’ve known instances of girls dieting to such an extent they have weakened their powers of resistance and developed TB.”173 Nevertheless, a poem entitled “Food” published in the 1925 Scroll suggests that being weighed was a common practice at GBC in this period.174 This is certainly true of fresh-air and agency institutions such as YWCA Camp Tinawatawa, where campers were weighed at the beginning and end of each session to “[count] the pounds gained.”175 As Leslie Paris and Sharon Wall have demonstrated, these directors were concerned that their charges were undernourished. Thus weight gain was pursued as an expression of healthful-
ness. Conversely, most of the compositions in The Scroll that deal with the sub-
ject of weight express concern over thickening waistlines, suggesting a classed experience of weight at summer camp.176 For example, “It Can’t Be Done!” describes a girl who came to GBC and, despite abandoning potatoes, butter, sugar, and meat, “never could reduce.” The closing stanza of the poem suggests this was a common challenge for Glen Bernard campers:

Just why she never could get thin
Is still a mystery.
We’ve come to think it can’t be done
While one’s at G.B.C.177

There appears to have been a general assumption that attending camp would result in weight gain.178 Consider the following schedule for the close of camp in 1928: “Tuesday – Packing!!! Has anyone seen my dunnage bag? How much have you gained?”179 While some tried to counter this gain by avoiding particular kinds of foods, others, including those described in “Our Overnight Trip,” used exercise “in hopes of getting thinner.”180 The protagonist of “Food” feels rather differently. After spending the summer “eating her fill,” this camper was “forced to hop the scales. Then oh! the sudden woeful wails.” Upon her return home, she could be heard to say “Keep me away from the dining-room, For I’m starving now to make me thin, And I’ll eat again if I once begin.”181 By contrast, in “Mary Jane,”

173 QUA, 2057/9/1, “Going Back Home,” August 26, 1934.
174 The Scroll, 1925, pp. 31-32.
175 University of Waterloo Archives, YWCA of Kitchener-Waterloo, GA75, File 889, “Miss Eleanor Fraser’s Group Secures Honors,” July 13, 1937.
177 The Scroll, 1925, p. 19. A similar situation to “It Can’t Be Done!” is described in “A Weighty Matter” (The Scroll, 1928, p. 42), which relates the story of “the prettiest little flapper, You ever before did see,” who went to camp and promptly gained a not insignificant amount of weight. It was an “awful fate,” the author concludes. However, it is the subject of the poem who gets the last word: “I do not care a bit, For what a hit I’ll make!” This statement could be interpreted as a play on words or as a celebration of bodies of every shape and size.
178 A note in the 1930 Scroll encouraged those who gain 20 pounds at camp to “Laugh It Off!” (p. 4).
180 The Scroll, 1930, p. 29.
181 The Scroll, 1925, pp. 31-32.
a poem about a girl who starves herself and then overeats, the author appears to be advocating moderation, as neither “scrawny, bony, thin and wan” or “round and plump” is presented as desirable. One poem, “Pat’s Appetite,” approaches the issue from the other side. Here, author Diana Sclater expresses concern for Patricia who, despite an apparent penchant for sweets, appears to have lost her appetite to the point that “her shorts are no longer appallingly tight.”

The ambivalence about weight that exists in the pages of The Scroll fits with the findings of American historian Margaret Lowe in her research on Smith College, a private women’s college in Massachusetts. Lowe argues that the 1920s marked a transition from weight gain as a sign of good health to weight gain as suggestive of “weakened will-power and a potential loss of feminine appeal.” She attributes this shift to “the development of the new ‘youth culture’ which emphasized heterosexual dating,” “the influence of popular culture, especially flapper imagery,” and “the popularization of scientific nutrition.” These particular poems are also a testament to what Joan Jacobs Brumberg describes as the body as project, in which the adolescent female body is understood as a malleable site for self-improvement and the expression of personal identity.

It is difficult to know what motivated these concerns about body image among girls at Glen Bernard. While the girls who attended Glen Bernard were younger than Lowe’s college women, they certainly operated in a similar world, particularly while in Toronto where many of the campers attended elite private girls’ schools such as Havergal College and Branksome Hall. Moreover, while at camp, they were overseen by university-aged women, who themselves may have been part of a similar milieu to the one described by Lowe. Nevertheless, camp functioned somewhat differently than a college or private school, a fact to which the girls attest in their writing. For example, “Camp” details some of the perceived differences between camp and the city:

Instead of racing through the wood
I must be so very good,

185 Ibid., pp. 42-44.
187 During the camp’s first summer, the counsellors included a nurse, a teacher from Havergal, students from Queen’s University, a biology instructor from University of Toronto, and a woman from the Margaret Eaton School (“First Girls Camp Brilliant Success,” The Arrow, August 24, 1922). Susan Miller raises similar questions in Growing Girls, p. 214.
I must look so prim and neat
As I go walking down the street.189

Through their poetry, in other words, girls articulated a feeling of freedom while at camp that was tied to appearance and bodily practice. Whatever the origins of these concerns, the example of body image nevertheless reinforces our understanding of camp as a community with its own rewards, expectations, stresses, and cruelties. The poems about weight demonstrate that body image did not stem from abstract images on a page, but was forged within the context of communities and the myriad social interactions that gave them shape.

**Conclusion**

Between September 1921 and June 1922, a portion of the eastern shore of Lake Bernard, near the hamlet of Sundridge, Ontario, was transformed from an abandoned farm into a summer camp for girls. The built and natural environments of this first permanent summer camp for Canadian girls in Ontario provided the physical contours for the camping experience. Also important were the imaginings and practices of director Mary S. Edgar and the staff and counsellors she hired. In the tales they spun, the rules they instated, and the activities they organized, the “administrators” of the camping experience infused the campsite with particular kinds of meaning, but also provided the building blocks for a Glen Bernard community. However, girls’ camps, to borrow from Leslie Paris, were “simultaneously adult-run institutions and spaces of children’s culture, places where ideologies of girlhood were in play and places where girls themselves played.”190

To date, historical accounts of the camping movement have been largely recreated from the vantage point of adults. Whether these insights were produced by camp directors or counsellors or were the recollections of campers and staff in their later years, our understanding of summer camps has favoured the perspective of the adults involved in running and forming them. Here, I have sought to balance adult interpretations of camp life by exploring how the well-educated, well-off, and largely Anglo-Protestant girls and young women who attended Glen Bernard in the 1920s and 1930s described life at camp while there. On the one hand, the girls’ contributions to *The Scroll* complement our understanding of the institutional structures of summer camp by shedding light on the size of the camp, its make-up, and the kinds of activities it offered. They also provide a window onto places, activities, and experiences that, while not elements of the official programme, were nevertheless part of the fabric of girls’ everyday lives at GBC. Even more importantly, in the creative writing published in *The Scroll* the girls offer clues as to what these particular places, activities, and experiences meant to them as campers. Constrained by the obligatory nature of the exercise, by form, and by what was “sayable” in front of their counsellors and peers,

189 “Camp,” *The Scroll*, 1927, p. 3.
their words nevertheless enable historians to better understand how girls moved through and occupied the spaces of summer camp, to glimpse the ways campers and camp were shaped by these movements and habitations, and to gauge some of their responses to being there.

A reading of The Scroll suggests that camp, for these elite campers at least, was as much about community and place as it was about becoming adequately socialized in a way that met the demands of the modern world. In other words, camp was understood and experienced as a unique place of relationships formed and fashioned in a world apart from, but still very much connected to, home. This is particularly evident in the handful of poems, often entitled with a variation on the camp name, that sought to encapsulate the GBC experience in a few stanzas.191 Not only do these poems make clear that the Glen Bernard experience was not the Tanamakoon or Wapomeo experience, they also, almost without exception, describe the relationships that were so central to camp life, as well as the specificities of the material landscape that campers inhabited for four or eight weeks each summer.

As much as these poems were a reflection of situated experiences, they also played another role as part of the larger formative processes of the camp as community and place. In describing their experiences and impressions of camp within the context of The Scroll and the associated campfire ritual, girls participated in a dialogue that marked the landscape and their peers in indelible ways. The description of time spent in a canoe on Lake Bernard or participating in the Council Ring may have evoked places and experiences familiar to others gathered around the campfire. Alternatively, the identification of meaningful places may have encouraged others to seek out such locales, which we might imagine as becoming evident in new trails established to particular locations or in the residue of red paint on rocks in shallow water along the camp’s shoreline. Poems about weight, by contrast, functioned as forms of community regulation, articulating ideals imposed not from the director (although there were many of these as well), but disseminated through the “rank and file” of the camp. Thus the stories told in The Scroll participated in manufacturing both the material and social landscapes of Glen Bernard.